

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /067 W

----- 002116

R 011700Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3136

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3046

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, FR, CI

SUBJ: CHILE-FRANCE RELATIONS

REF: SANTIAGO 2997

1. SUMMARY. GOC HAS PUBLICLY CLOSED KAUFFMAN CASE, BUT FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAS APPARENTLY MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO GOC. KAUFFMAN PLANS TO GO TO PARIS IN NEAR FUTURE. MEANWHILE, SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE URRUTIA DECLINED APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICERS OF CHILEAN NEWSMEN'S ASSOCIATION CALLED ON MININTERIOR GEN. BENAVIDES AND SECYGEN OF PRESIDENCY GEN. BEJARES APRIL 19 IN CONNECTION WITH DETENTION AND SUBSEQUENT RELEASE OF AFP BUREAU CHIEF JACQUES KAUFFMAN AND HIS CHILEAN ASSISTANT ENRIQUE GUZMAN (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, BENAVIDES AND BEJARES STATED THAT NO DETENTION ORDER OR OTHER CHARGE IS OUTSTANDING AGAINST EITHER JOURNALIST, AND BOTH ARE FREE TO COME AND GO AS THEY WISH. MINISTERS REITERATED GOC DESIRE TO MAINTAIN A FREE PRESS AND GOC WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT "CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM." MINISTERS ARE QUOTED AS SAYING CASE IS NOW CLOSED AS FAR AS GOC IS CONCERNED; NO PUNISHMENT FOR OR PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR DE-CONFIDENTIAL

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TENTION OF NEWSMEN HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED.

3. KAUFFMAN, MEANWHILE, IS STAYING AS "HOUSEGUEST" OF FRENCH EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY. HE PLANS TO GO TO PARIS IN NEAR FUTURE, AND IS REPORTEDLY PLEASED WITH HIS NEW ROLE AS "HERO." GUZMAN SPENT NIGHT OF APRIL 29 IN HOME OF GOC PRESS CHIEF FEDERICO WILLOUGHBY. REPORTEDLY GUZMAN PLANS TRIP TO BUENOS AIRES SOON.

4. FRENCH AMBASSADOR CALLED ON FONMIN ADM. CARVAJAL AFTERNOON APRIL 29, TELLING REPORTERS ONLY THAT HE DISCUSSED "FRANCO-CHILEAN RELATIONS."

5. RIGHTWING, SENSATIONALIST "LA SEGUNDA" PUBLISHED VERSION OF WHY SECURITY AGENTS DETAINED KAUFFMAN AND GUZMAN. STORY THEY WERE COVERING WAS FORMATION OF PRO-GOVERNMENT CIVIC MOVEMENT (SEPTTEL). ACCORDING TO LA SEGUNDA, SOME PARTICIPANTS IN THIS MEETING ALLEGEDLY HEARD COMMENT TO EFFECT THAT A NEW "NAZI PARTY" WAS BEING ORGANIZED, AND DENOUNCED THEM TO SECURITY AGENTS.

6. IN SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, RETIRING SUPREME COURT CHIEF JUSTICE ENRIQUE URRUTIA PUBLICLY DECLINED PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE (SANTIAGO 1133). IN LETTER TO PRESIDENT PINOCHET, URRUTIA CITED "A PRESS AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGN" AGAINST HIM WHICH WOULD INHIBIT HIS EFFECTIVENESS AS GOC'S REP IN PARIS. IN PUBLIC REPLY, PINOCHET ACCEPTED URRUTIA'S REASONS, THANKED HIM PROFUSELY FOR HIS PATRIOTISM, AND NOTED "THE STRONG TIES OF BROTHERHOOD" BETWEEN CHILE AND FRANCE.

7. COMMENT. SENIOR FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL TOLD US MINISTRY IS EXTREMELY UPSET BY ACTION OF SECURITY FORCES RE KAUFFMAN, GIVEN DELICACY OF PARIS CLUB SITUATION. "IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH THEY (SECURITY FORCES) WANTED TO SABOTAGE OUR EFFORTS," HE ADDED.

8. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF AL SEGUNDA'S VERSION OF REASONS FOR KAUFFMAN'S DETENTION, BUT FACT IT IS ENTIRELY CREDIBLE TO MANY CHILEANS IS REFLECTION OF ATMOSPHERE HERE. IT IS TRUE KAUFFMAN HAS WIDE CONFIDENTIAL

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CIRCLE OF CONTACTS, INCLUDING SEVERAL CRITICS OF PRESENT GOVT. HE ALSO DID INTERVIEW IN NOVEMBER WITH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER RENAN FUENTEALBA WHICH RESULTED IN LATTER'S EXPULSION FROM CHILE.

9. URRUTIA'S WITHDRAWAL MERELY CONFIRMS AND ADJUSTS TO WHAT HAS BEEN ACCEPTED AS FACT IN LOCAL DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES FOR WEEKS; THAT GOF WOULD NOT GRANT AGREEMENT FOR HIM.

SOME HERE BELIEVE THAT FRENCH REFUSAL WAS FOR THE BEST
SINCE FRENCH LEFT COULD BE EXPECTED TO EXPLOIT UNMERCIFULLY
URRUTIA'S IDENTIFICATION WITH THE JUNTA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DETENTION, POLITICAL SITUATION, COURTS DECISION, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANTIA03046
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750154-0848
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750589/aaaaddzx.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SANTIAGO 2997
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <01 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHILE-FRANCE RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, FR, CI, (KAUFFMAN, JACQUES), (URRUTIA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006